

FROM :

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May. 10 2006 04:08PM P1

PLO MISSION

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بعثة
نظام التحرير الفلسطينية
واشنطن
(٢٠٢) ٩٧٤-٦٣٦٠ • (٢٠٢) ٩٧٤-٦٣٦٠

April 27, 2006

The Honorable Condoleezza Rice
Secretary of State of the United States
Washington, DC

Dear Secretary Rice,

We are most grateful to President Bush for his new determination, issued on April 3, 2006, to authorize our office to continue to function in Washington, DC as a foreign mission for an additional six months.

We are very anxious for there to be this clear and open line of communication between President Abbas and the PLO with the United States at this critical time.

While it is an embarrassingly small matter to present to you, we find ourselves to be without assured and sufficient funds to operate the PLO office for two related reasons. Our operating funds on deposit with the Wachovia Bank in Washington have been frozen by a U.S. District Court order and U.S. banks are unwilling to provide us essential banking services under the circumstances.

As you may know, approximately \$200,000 that were on deposit in our bank accounts in Washington have been held in the Registry of the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia pursuant to Judge Kessler's order since July 2005. The Wachovia Bank, HSBC and other banks, are unwilling to provide commercial banking services to the PLO under these circumstances even though limited to the purposes of continuing the Mission's official operation. The funds were frozen on the application of private Israeli citizens who hold a default judgment against the PA and PLO of \$216 million in a wrongful death action brought in U.S. District Court in Rhode Island for events occurring in Israel in 1996. There are at least seven other similar actions pending in U.S. Courts.

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نخبة التحرير الفلسطينية
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For these reasons I urgently request you to ask the Department of Justice to file a Statement of Interest on behalf of the U.S. in the proceeding before Judge Kessler, your Legal Advisor's office is fully aware of this matter. A similar case based on the same judgment was filed in the U.S. District Court in the Southern District of New York where the creditor sought to use the judgment as the basis for seizing and selling Palestine's U.N. Mission. A statement of Interest was filed by the U.S. in opposition to this seizure and sale in New York in September 2005 and the Court stopped the proceeding. The Statement of Interest was based on your powers under the Foreign Mission Act and, in part, on a prior determination by President Bush identical to the determination the President has again made on April 13, 2006 with respect to the continued operation of the PLO Mission. I hereby determine and certify that it is important to the national security interests of the United States to waive the provisions of section 1003 [of Public Law 100-204].

The need to maintain the PLO Mission as one of the few lines of communication between the governments of the U.S. and President Abbas and the PLO is of great importance to the Palestinian people and we believe to America, as well. The office serves vital U.S. national interests and longstanding U.S. foreign policy goals in the Middle East.

Without the relief we are requesting - the release to the PLO of its frozen funds, and the ability to utilize ordinary commercial banking services limited to the modest needs of the office - the PLO may have to close its office in Washington.

We seek your assistance to preserve this vital link of communication under the extremely difficult circumstances of the moment.

Respectfully,

Afif Safieh
Head of the PLO Mission
Washington, DC